

DATE: March 11, 2020

SUBJECT: Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor Guidance

Dear Sponsors,

Concurrently with other federal agencies, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) in the U.S. Department of State (the Department) continues to monitor global developments. ECA provides the following information to assist Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) sponsors with the implementation of exchange programs worldwide.

Sponsors should advise exchange visitors traveling through or from affected countries to refer to guidance from the Department (<https://travel.state.gov>), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (<https://www.cbp.gov/border-security/ports-entry>) for travel restrictions and health notices, as well as specific port-of-entry screening processes.

The following guidance applies with respect to exchange visitors who are currently in active status or are in the United States and in initial status. This guidance is not intended for new or initial-status exchange visitors who have not yet entered the United States.

ECA recognizes that sponsors share its commitment to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the hundreds of thousands of exchange visitors participating in the EVP and the Americans with whom they interact. ECA also acknowledges that the uncertainty created by the widespread outbreak requires flexibility. We anticipate a range of changes to program circumstances that will affect exchange visitors. ECA asks sponsors and exchange visitors to consult with host organizations to seek alternative ways to maintain program objectives and/or employment, such as telework, online classes, or other arrangements, while preventing unnecessary exposure to the disease and its spread. A temporary modification along these lines for exigent circumstances beyond a sponsor's or host entity's control does not undermine a program's consistency with the regulations.

With regard to requirements to notify the Department of changes to an exchange visitor's program or circumstances, ECA recognizes that the situation is fluid and rapidly changing. As such, sponsors may need to make changes to programs with little notice, for example to comply with state or local health emergency declarations. In such situations, sponsors' obligations regarding the health, safety, and welfare of exchange visitors may conflict with sponsors' obligations in the regulations and implementing guidance to provide advance notice of certain changes to exchange visitors' situations. If that occurs, the Department would support sponsors' prioritization of their health, safety, and welfare obligations. Sponsors should provide the required notifications as soon as practicable.

Please send incident reports and questions to the ECA email address below that correlates with the exchange visitor's EVP category:

[AGalert@state.gov](mailto:AGalert@state.gov) (Government Visitor, International Visitor, Research Scholar, Short-Term Scholar, Specialist, University Student, and Professor Categories)

[HighSchoolExchanges@state.gov](mailto:HighSchoolExchanges@state.gov) (Secondary School Student Category)

[Teacher\\_Physician@state.gov](mailto:Teacher_Physician@state.gov) (Teacher and Alien Physician Categories)

[AuPairProgram@state.gov](mailto:AuPairProgram@state.gov) (Au Pair Category)

[CCSponsors@state.gov](mailto:CCSponsors@state.gov) (Camp Counselor Category)

[InternTraineeNotify@state.gov](mailto:InternTraineeNotify@state.gov) (Intern and Trainee Categories)

[SWTSponsors@state.gov](mailto:SWTSponsors@state.gov) (Summer Work Travel Category)

ECA is monitoring this situation closely and will supplement this guidance with additional information and/or will adjust guidance as needed.

Respectfully,

Office of Private Sector Exchange